

Substance Use in Adolescents

Definition: Current youth substance use refers to a youth (grades 6, 8, 10 and 12) who has used alcohol, tobacco or other illicit substances on one or more of the past 30 days, as measured on the Healthy Youth Survey.

Key Findings

Tobacco Use

- ❖ In 2002, about 22% of 12th graders, 15% of 10th graders, 9% of 8th graders, and 2% of 6th graders reported current cigarette smoking. Cigarette smoking in adolescents peaked in 1995-1998 (depending on the grade) and has been dropping in recent years.^{1,2,4}
- ❖ The percent reporting regular tobacco use (tobacco use every day for the past 30 days) increases dramatically as students get older. Approximately 3% of 6th graders, 10% of 8th graders, 16% of 10th graders, and 25% of 12th graders report regular tobacco use.²
- ❖ The prevalence of smokeless tobacco use in 2002 was about 1% for 6th Grade, 3% for 8th Grade, 5% for 10th Grade and 8% for 12th graders. Smokeless tobacco use steadily declined among Washington youth throughout the mid to late-1990s but remained relatively constant from 2000 to 2002.^{1,2}
- ❖ In 2002, about 10% of 8th Grade students, 19% of 10th Grade students, and 27% of 12th Grade students reported binge drinking in the past two weeks. Binge drinking decreased among students in Grades 8 and 10 from 1998 to 2002.^{1,2}

Illicit Substance Use

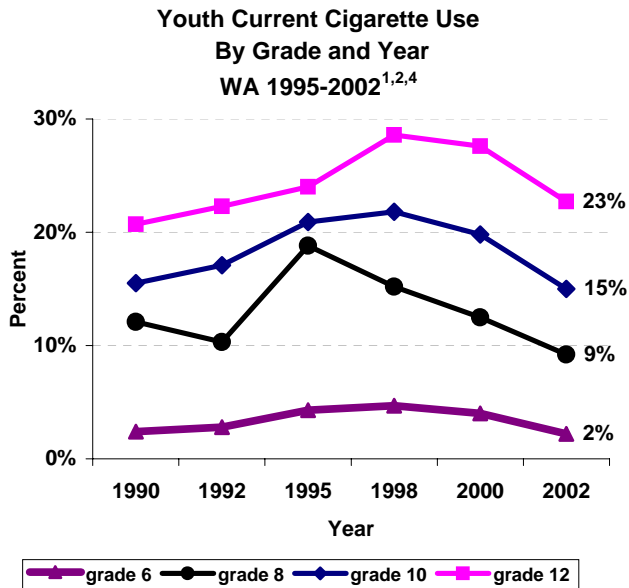
- ❖ Students who report smoking tobacco are more likely to also report using other drugs. For instance, in 10th grade, about 52% of smokers reported using marijuana in the past 30 days, as compared to 4% of non-smokers.²
- ❖ Between 2% and 5% of students reported having used methamphetamine, cocaine, steroids or ecstasy in their lifetimes. For example, methamphetamine use in the past 30 days was reported by about 2% of Grade 8 students, 3% of Grade 10 students, and 2% of Grade 12 students.²
- ❖ Related Healthy People 2010 objectives are to reduce current cigarette use in students grades 9 - 12 to no more than 16%; reduce current smokeless tobacco use to no more than 1%; and to reduce binge drinking in 12th graders to no more than 11%.³

Alcohol Use

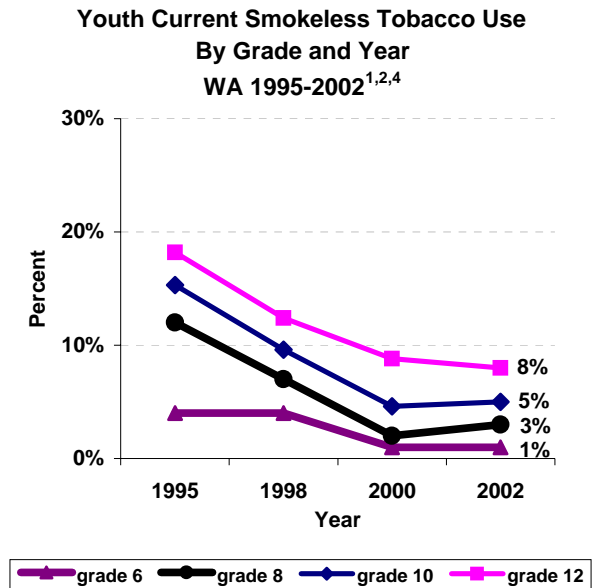
- ❖ In 2002, an estimated 5% of 6th grade males used alcohol in the past 30 days compared to 2% of females, in 8th grade about 16% of males used alcohol compared to 19% of females, and in 12th grade about 45% of males used alcohol compared to 41% of females. Except for the 6th grade, there is not statistically significant difference in current alcohol use between male and female students.²

Substance Use in Adolescents (cont.)

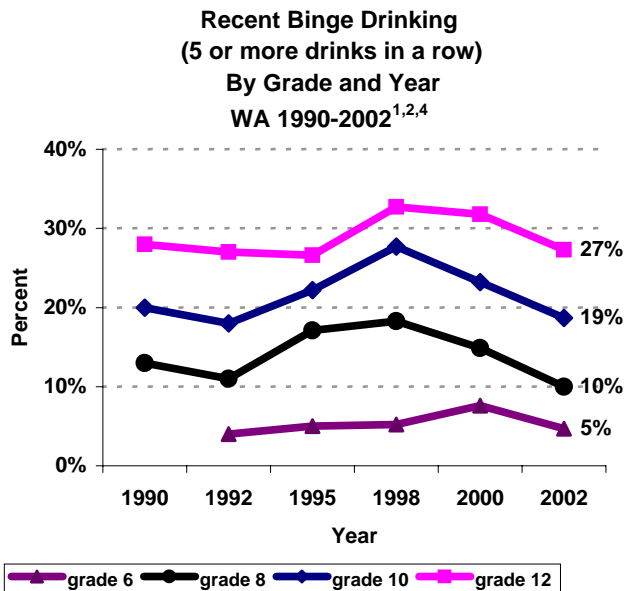
Cigarette Smoking



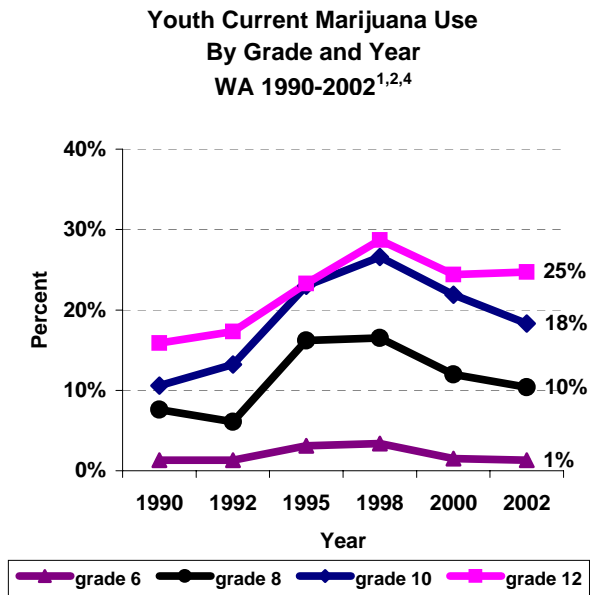
Smokeless Tobacco Use



Binge Drinking



Marijuana Use



Substance Use in Adolescents (cont.)

Data Sources

- ¹ Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000; Washington State Drug and Alcohol Survey, 1990
- ² Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Health, Department of Social and Health Services, and Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development and RMC Research Corporation. Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2002: Analytic Report. In preparation.
- ³ Department of Health and Human Services (US). Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health. 2nd edition. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office; November 2000.
- ⁴ Washington State Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 1999